



# NEWSLETTER



## Caledonia/Essex Service Center

### January 2011

**Farm Service Agency**  
481 Summer St., Ste 201  
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

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(802) 748-8746  
In VT 1-800-862-1121  
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[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

**Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**County Committee**  
Robert Porter, Chair  
William Nelson, Vice Chair  
Darcy Smart, Member  
Roger Sylvain, Member  
Heather Trudeau, Member

**COC meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of  
each month at 10:30 am**

**County Executive Director**  
Patricia Passut, ext 104  
[patricia.passut@vt.usda.gov](mailto:patricia.passut@vt.usda.gov)

**Program Staff**  
Patty Matte, ext 100

**Farm Loan Staff**  
**802-334-6090 or**  
**1-866-241-2190** (toll free)  
Brian Kuper, FLM  
Dorcas McAllister, FLO  
Meghan Dubois, FLO

**NRCS Staff**  
Nick Comerici, ext 101  
Jacob Clough, ext 117  
Brandon Carpenter, ext 106

**NRCD Staff**  
Kerry O'Brien, ext 110  
Tamara Stevens, ext 114

**Rural Development**  
Steve Campbell, ext 102  
Suzanne Smith, ext 112

## County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Roger Sylvain! Roger was elected to represent farmers from Burke, Kirby, Lyndon, Newark, St Johnsbury, and Waterford on the county committee. Roger was elected to his first term on the County Committee. Burt Patenaude, Karl Sjolander, and Gregory Gilman were elected 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> alternates, respectively.

FSA appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

The committee members held their organizational meeting on January 12, 2011. They chose Robert Porter to serve as the county committee chair and Bill Nelson as the vice-chair. **The monthly meeting of the COC will be held on the second Thursday of each month beginning at 10:30.**

## IRS Form 1099-G

Producers annually receive CCC-1099-Gs detailing payments producers have received from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The annual report of program payments on CCC-1099-Gs is a service intended to help our customers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the producers' responsibilities to report income to IRS.

FSA staff cannot interpret IRS regulations or advise producers about which payments to report on their income tax returns. However, county office staff can review payments for accuracy.

## Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance.

The application deadline for the 2011 coverage on **vegetable crops is March 15, 2011**. In order to be eligible for disaster assistance programs, including Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), producers are required to timely purchase, at a minimum, CAT coverage for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for all non-insurable crops on their entire farm.

NAP coverage costs \$250 per crop, but not more than \$750 per producer per county. These fees may be waived if you qualify as a Limited Resource Producer.

Production records for all crops must be reported to FSA no later than the acreage reporting date for the crop for the following year. FSA requires that any production reported in a loss year be verifiable according to Agency specifications. *NAP Losses must be reported within 15 days of the loss.*



## 2009 SURE Sign-up

Signup for the 2009 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) began Jan. 10, 2011 and will end July 29, 2011.

To be eligible for SURE payments, a producer must have obtained crop insurance on all crops in all counties or, if crop insurance was not available, had participated in the Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) except for grazed acreage.

The following conditions trigger SURE payments:

- at least one crop of economic significance must suffer a 10% loss due to an eligible disaster condition
- crop of economic significance is a crop that has contributed or would have contributed at least 5% or more of the total expected revenue from all crops on the farm
- producers in counties declared disaster counties by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in contiguous counties, or those who show proof of an individual loss of at least 50% are eligible to receive SURE payments for crop producer or crop quality losses.

Losses are measured with consideration to the whole-farm revenue, which includes crop insurance indemnities and commodity program payments, so that producers are not paid more than once for the same loss.

## Youth Loans

Remember FSA makes operating loans to individual rural youths age 10 through 20 to establish and operate income producing projects. These projects must be of modest size and be initiated, developed, carried out by rural youths participating in 4-H Clubs, FFA, or a similar organization or with a vocational teacher or county extension agent. The project must be an organized and supervised program of work. It must be planned and operated with the assistance of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan, and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience.

## Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.

The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility. Loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. January interest rates are 2.50% for a 7 year loan, 3.125% for a 10 year loan and 3.375% for a 12 year loan.

Please call to discuss eligibility requirements. If you are planning to build or upgrade your storage facility this spring, applications should be submitted soon. The loan must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

## Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

Ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee if you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan.

## Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

### Wool/Mohair/Unshorn Pelt LDPs

For crop year 2010—  
**January 31, 2011** is the final deadline to apply for a 2010 crop wool/mohair/unshorn pelt Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP). **You must apply and provide documentation by this date! Call for further information.**

For crop year 2011—  
There is a form that producers need to sign once per crop year, indicating their intention to apply for a Loan Deficiency Payment. This form must be signed and submitted prior to losing beneficial interest in the crop. Please contact the office for more details.



## Customer Statement

January signals the beginning of a new year, and a time to starting thinking about filing taxes. Producers who have signed up for a USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account will be able to access their farm data via their Customer Statement.

The Customer Statement puts a range of USDA services and programs into a single report that's at your fingertips and available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It allows USDA customers to view their participation, application and payment status in various commodity and conservation programs; information on farm loans; and conservation plan and land unit information.

**REMINDER:** If you are enrolled in the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC), please notify the FSA office if there are changes to your dairy operation.

## Foreign Buyers Notification

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA administers this program for USDA.

All individuals who are not U.S. citizens, and have purchased or sold agricultural land in the county are required to report the transaction to FSA with 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit the AFIDA form (FSA-153) could result in civil penalties of up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, Realtors, attorneys and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of these reporting requirements.

## Farming Operation Changes

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

## Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options your can pursue if you disagree.

Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

## Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan.

Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

## FSA Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse.

There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities.

Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents.

For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact your local FSA office.



## Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any FSA office near you for more information.

*Return Service Requested*



"The U.S. Dept of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

## Controlled Substance

Any person who is convicted under federal or state law of a controlled substance violation could be ineligible for USDA payments or benefits. Violations include planting, harvesting or growing a prohibited plant. Prohibited plants include marijuana, opium, poppies and other drug producing plants.

## Special Accommodations

Special accommodations will be made upon request for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment or hearing impairment. If accommodations are required, individuals should contact the county FSA office staff directly or by phone.

Dates to Remember	
Jan 31	LDP deadline for wool, mohair, unshorn pelts for 2010
Feb 15	Maple sap acreage reports (# of taps) due
Feb 21	Washington's birthday – Office closed
March 15	Deadline to purchase crop insurance for insurable spring seeded crops
March 15	Deadline to purchase NAP coverage on spring seeded crops
Ongoing	Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL)
	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

## Sorghum Checkoff Referendum

The US Department of Agriculture has finalized procedures for the upcoming referendum on the continuation of the Sorghum Checkoff Program and is announcing the dates it will conduct the referendum.

For the program to continue, the Sorghum Promotion, Research, and Information Order requires that a referendum be conducted no later than 3 years after the start of assessments, which began on July 1, 2008. The order requires a simple majority vote in the referendum for the program to continue.

USDA will conduct the referendum February 1-28, 2011, at local Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices for producers.

Any eligible person engaged in the production or importation of sorghum from July 1, 2008 to Dec 31, 2010, is eligible to participate. Individuals are required to provide documentation such as sales receipt or remittance form that shows they engaged in the production or importation of sorghum.

Sorghum Checkoff is a national, coordinated, self-help marketing program designed to strengthen the position of sorghum in the marketplace, maintain and expand existing domestic and foreign markets and uses for sorghum, and develop new markets and uses for sorghum.

Contact the local FSA office for a ballot and more details.